

To: Hedman, Susan[hedman.susan@epa.gov]; R5Hotline[R5Hotline@epa.gov]
From: sarah
Sent: Fri 8/22/2014 9:40:00 PM
Subject: Ojibwe tribes & Penokee hills

Dear Ms. Hedman,

I would like to start by thanking you for your valuable work with the EPA. I know you must always have a full plate, and I thank you for taking the time to read my concerns.

I would like the EPA to honor the request of the Ojibwe tribal governments and initialize the 404(c) process under the Clean Water Act. I am not a tribal member, but I am a small business owner and I chose to move to this area because of the natural beauty, serenity, and endless outdoor activities. My business, a stained glass studio, is dependent on tourism, as is most of our economy up here. Allowing this mine would decimate our economy. The state of Wisconsin, as well as out of state millionaires and PACs are intent on shoving this mine into our lives, into our pristine wilderness as fast as they can before anyone can mobilize dollars, lawyers, or politicians to stop them. GTAC has broken laws and broken trust. The vast majority of the people of northern Wisconsin do not want this mine, yet it appears that we do not have enough cash to be heard? It has been shown that we would be put at grave risk- asbestiform minerals in our air and sulfide minerals in our water- if this is allowed to continue. GTAC has already been permitted to drill dozens of core samples and conduct "bulk sampling". This has already damaged our hills and could already be threatening our waters. GTAC continues to say "why are the fanatics upset that we are gathering data? Don't they want to know the facts?" Yet we have seen the facts from independent scientists who have found harmful minerals; and GTAC is refusing to share their own findings, calling it "proprietary information". They have been allowed to take away our access to managed forest land, write their own laws, trump our DNR, hire out of state security firms to operate illegally... this must end!

The vast and irreparable damage to our greatest lake must not be allowed. The vast and irreparable damage to our relations with all Native American tribes must not be allowed! We cannot change what others have done in the past but we do have a responsibility today to uphold treaty rights. As well, we have responsibility to all future generations. As sovereign nations, the Bad River tribe and other tribes have the rights to protect their homeland and their future. I do not want to see the government of the state of Wisconsin or the federal government going to war with my neighbors. This insane threat to their entire culture and way of life has largely been ignored by politicians and the mining company, but it is hard to overstate. The wild rice that is sacred, and a main staple of their diet, would be entirely wiped out. Their ability to hunt, fish and gather on the ceded territories from the treaty of 1842 would be no longer. Their ability to hunt, fish and gather on their own reservation would be irreparably damaged, as would their ability to live healthy lives breathing fresh air and drinking clean water.

I do not need to point to mining accidents. You can barely turn around without hearing about the newest Mount Polly tragedy. As an EPA official and an Illinois resident, I'm sure I do not need to remind you of Cline Corporations terrible record of mining violations. You probably know about Bill Williams being wanted in Spain. I'm sure I do not need to remind you of the RAMSAR convention designating the Bad River and Kakagon sloughs as "wetlands of international importance". I do not need to convince you of the dangers of global warming and fresh water shortages. This threat to our fresh water must be stopped in its tracks.

The EPA's webpage has a list of offices that it oversees: the office of children's health protection, the office of civil rights, the office of homeland security, these are all very relevant to

this issue of a potential mine in the lake superior basin. Please protect the health of our children, our civil rights, and our homeland. I would also point you to an EPA publication put out in August 2005, funded by the U.S. EPA-STAR program, grant # R828675- "New Index of Environmental Condition for Coastal Watersheds in the Great Lakes Basin", which has a very nice color coded graphic of the health of the watersheds. Our area here is designated as some of the healthiest, and this publication is meant for use as a tool to identify areas in need of protection, monitoring, or restoration. As someone who grew up in Minnesota and is still a tourist (I will be in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in one week), I would also ask that you halt the proposed polymet mine on the border of the BWCAW. These threats to Lake Superior in the name of profit are unacceptable. Please help us protect Lake Superior.

Looking at your background, I saw that you earned a PhD from the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies. You are no doubt familiar with his legacy and his help in creating the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, which I am lucky to wake up to each day. From my home here in Bayfield I can also see the Penoque Hills rolling in the distance. No tourist is going to want to come sailing on our beautiful lake or trekking to the ice caves if they can hear and see the hills being blown up on the horizon.

In 1963 Gaylord Nelson talked President John F. Kennedy into a national tour to draw attention to conservation issues. Fifty-one years ago JFK flew over the Penoque hills, the Kakagon and Bad River sloughs, and the Apostle Islands... because Gaylord Nelson had the foresight to urge him. At the airport in Ashland, Kennedy spoke of "the crisis facing our natural resources-- our fresh water, our soil, our forests and streams,our minerals, even the air we breathe."

Please consider how much has already been done to preserve this gem of a spot on the map, please do not stand by silently and let money win out over what is right.

I repectfully urge you, Susan Hedman, to use the 404(c) authority under the clean water act and review this detrimental proposition.

I would very much appreciate a response to this letter.

Thank you for your time,
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